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SIPDIS

SENSITIVE

NEA FOR BURNS/SATTERFIELD/DIBBLE;
NEA/SA/EX FOR RICHIE; DEPT FOR DS/IP/ITA; DEPT FOR
DS/IP/NEA;
DRL FOR A/S CRANER; NSC FOR ABRAMS/DANIN;
USAID FOR DCHA, DCHA/FPP, PRM FOR DEWEY/GREENE

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [KWBG](#) [PHUM](#) [PREL](#) [PTER](#) [ASEC](#) [CASC](#) [GZ](#) [IS](#)

SUBJECT: WB/G SITREP: NO INJURIES IN ANTI-TANK MISSILE
STRIKE ON NORTHERN GAZA SYNAGOGUE; SETTLER VANDALISM IN
WEST BANK: DECEMBER 21, 2004 (1200 HOURS LOCAL)

This is a joint ConGen Jerusalem/Embassy Tel Aviv cable.

1. (SBU) Summary: Settlers from Zufin settlement, near Qalqiliya, uprooted and torched trees near the West Bank village of Jayyus December 20. Also on December 20, settlers from Yitzhar settlement, near Nablus, disconnected the water supply to an IDF outpost and punctured the tires of a military jeep as the soldiers were attempting to prevent the hookup of a water supply to an illegal settlement outpost. On December 20, militants detonated an explosive device against an IDF patrol near Rachel's Tomb in Bethlehem, according to Israeli and Palestinian newspapers. No injuries were reported. In Gaza, Palestinian militants December 21 fired two anti-tank missiles at the northern Israeli settlements, one of which struck a synagogue during morning prayers. No injuries were reported, but the building was extensively damaged, according to media reports. End Summary.

West Bank

2. (SBU) ATTACKS/SECURITY:

-- Deaths: Nil.

-- Injuries: Nil.

-- Arrests: On December 20, a total of nine Palestinians were arrested in the different areas of the West Bank, according to Palestinian dailies.

-- Explosion: On December 20, militants detonated an explosive device against an IDF patrol near Rachel's Tomb in Bethlehem, according to Israeli and Palestinian newspapers. No injuries were reported.

3. (SBU) INCURSIONS/DEMOLITIONS/CLOSURES

-- On December 20, an Israeli driver working for a gas company had to be rescued from stone-throwers after he drove his private car into Qalandia refugee camp, according to Israeli and Palestinian reports. The Israeli was unharmed.

-- On December 21, the IDF entered the center of Nablus and imposed curfew, according to Palestinian dailies.

-- On December 20, settlers from Zufin settlement, near Qalqiliya, uprooted and torched trees near the West Bank village of Jayyus, according to Palestinian reports.

-- On December 20, settlers from Yitzhar settlement, near Nablus, disconnected the water supply to an IDF outpost, and punctured the tires of a military jeep, according to Israeli radio. The IDF soldiers were attempting to prevent the hookup of a water supply to an illegal settlement outpost.

4. (SBU) POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS

-- A memorial service for Yaser Arafat was held at the Muqata'a in Ramallah on December 21, according to Palestinian reports. Similar services were held in the other West Bank cities for people unable to reach Ramallah.

Gaza

5. (SBU) ATTACKS:

-- Deaths: Nil.

-- Injury: UNRWA reported that an eight-year-old girl was shot and wounded December 21 in Rafah during an exchange of fire between IDF soldiers and Palestinian militants.

-- Injuries: UNRWA reported that at least one Palestinian was shot and wounded by IDF gunfire December 21 along the Coastal Road, along the Netzarim detour.

-- Injuries: UNRWA reported that IDF gunfire wounded two Palestinians in Rafah December 20.

-- Mortars/Rockets: Israeli media reported that Palestinian militants December 21 fired two anti-tank missiles at the northern Israeli settlements. One of the missiles struck a synagogue during morning prayers. No injuries were reported but the building was extensively damaged, according to media reports.

-- Mortars/Rockets: The IDF reported that Palestinian militants fired two Qassam rockets at targets in Israel December 20, one at Kibbutz Or Haner and the other at Kibbutz Nativ Ha'asura. Militants also fired a total of eight mortar shells at IDF and Israeli settler targets in the Gaza strip overnight December 20-21.

-- Shootings: The IDF reported that Palestinian militants launched three shooting attacks in the Gaza Strip overnight December 20-21.

16. (SBU) INCURSIONS/DEMOLITIONS:

-- UNRWA reported that IDF tanks and bulldozers entered the area near Sufa Crossing December 20 and began excavations aimed at locating tunnels.

17. (SBU) BORDER CROSSINGS:

-- Route Four (Salahadeen Road), the main north-south traffic artery, was closed December 21 at Netzarim Junction, when the IDF blocked the Coastal Road detour. The Coastal Road was re-opened at 1200 hours, according to UNRWA.

-- Erez Crossing was open for internationals and for a limited number of Palestinians December 20. Information on the number of Palestinians who crossed into Israel was not available.

-- The Erez Industrial Zone remained closed December 21, although a small number of factory owners have been allowed entry.

-- Sufa Crossing was closed for Palestinian laborers December 21, but was open for the import of aggregates used in construction.

-- Karni Terminal was open December 21.

-- Rafah Terminal was closed for arrivals and departures December 21.

-- Tel al-Sultan checkpoint was closed December 21. Toufah checkpoint was open for residents of al-Mowassi.

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KURTZER